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SUBJECT: CURRENT STATUS OF IRAQI AIRCRAFT IN JORDAN

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: CPA officials have informally sought Embassy Amman's assistance in determining the status and timely return to Iraqi government control of seven airplanes of probable Iraqi government ownership currently known to be located in Jordan. Post was able to take a close look at six of the airplanes, Iraqi Airways jets parked in Amman since 1991, and found them in varying states of repair. Their disposition raises financial, legal, and practical issues on which Embassy would appreciate Washington guidance. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Of the seven aircraft, six Iraqi Airways craft have remained at Queen Alia International Airport near Amman since their last flights in 1991-1992 and have received little/no maintenance since 1999. They are in various stages of repair, but there seems to be no dispute as to their ownership. An informal assessment by TDY military personnel (text below) found that one of these airplanes could probably be flown out with relatively minimal further maintenance, and others could potentially be flown out with moderate further maintenance. In addition to the practical airworthiness questions, Jordanian officials are likely to raise questions about the legal status of the aircraft under post-1991 sanctions against Iraq and UNSCR 1483 before allowing their return to Iraq or sale on behalf of Iraq. In addition, the GOJ has incurred demurrage and other costs after a decade of airport parking for which it may seek compensation. (Post is seeking information on the accumulated amount of such charges.)

¶3. (SBU) The seventh airplane, a Dassault Falcon-50 executive jet (tail number HB-IES), has been impounded at Marka Airport in Amman since March 19, 2003. While it is in good repair, the ownership of this airplane is unclear. According to Jordanian records, the plane is owned by a Swiss company, Aviatrans, and operated by Jet Aviation, also a Swiss company. While they know that the jet was used to transport senior Iraqi officials during the 1990s, the Jordanians will want to be assured of the Iraqi government's rights to the aircraft before releasing it. Post is in process of trying to obtain the serial number of this airplane from the Jordan Civil Air Authority (JCAA) and will update the Department when the number has been obtained.

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TEXT OF HACC REPORT  
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¶2. (SBU) On 25 August 2003, LtCol Mareus Richter, a USAF maintenance and logistics officer, and Maj Derek Fox, a USAF officer working in the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center(Amman, conducted an initial assessment of the status of six Iraqi Airways aircraft located at Queen Alia Airport, Jordan. Their report follows:

¶3. (SBU) Aircraft were identified by distinctive livery, tail registration number and airframe numbers. They were assessed by visual inspection for visible corrosion, structural damage, leaks, and missing parts. A review of flight logs was done and application of external power was conducted. All aircraft were powered up by Lt Col Richter with spot checks of fuel levels, transfer pump operation, instrument initialization etc conducted.

¶4. (SBU) Boeing 707 Cargo, YI AGE, 692917 ) Condition Fair, last recorded flight April 1992, last maintenance activity ¶1999. Engines 1, & 2 no visible corrosion, 3 & 4 have visible corrosion/perforations, some engine nacelle skin corrosion, no visible structural airframe corrosion, structural condition of tail assembly unknown, paint peeling in places, tires low/flat and cracked, landing gear and hydraulic systems had no visible corrosion or damage, accumulators still holding pressure, interior serviceable, cockpit was serviceable, radar head had been removed, batteries on aircraft bad, but disconnected, cargo bay was serviceable. Fuel was still present in tanks. External power was applied but there was a problem with a connection in the lower bay, which precluded checking any systems.

¶5. (SBU) Boeing 707 Cargo in PAX configuration, YI AGF, ?????? (no number plate found) ) Condition poor, last recorded flight January 1991, last known maintenance activity ¶1999. All 4 engines have visible corrosion/perforations, some engine nacelle skin corrosion, no visible structural

airframe corrosion, structural condition of tail assembly unknown, paint had minor peeling, tires low and cracked, landing gear and hydraulic systems no visible corrosion or damage, accumulators still holding pressure, batteries on aircraft bad, but disconnected, cargo bay was converted to PAX configuration, interior dirty but could be made serviceable in cargo configuration, cockpit was serviceable, radar was present. Fuel was still present in tanks. External power was applied, and all systems powered up, fuel transfer pumps worked and ILS initialized.

16. (SBU) Boeing 727-270 PAX configuration, YI AGK, 21197-A3WE)700, Condition good, last recorded flight unknown, last known maintenance activity 1999. Engines 1, 2 & 3 no visible corrosion, no visible structural airframe corrosion, structural condition of upper tail assembly unknown, paint good, tires low and showing minor cracking, landing gear and hydraulic systems had no visible corrosion or damage, accumulators still holding pressure, interior serviceable, cockpit was serviceable, batteries on aircraft, but disconnected. Fuel was still present in tanks. External power was applied, and all systems powered up, fuel transfer pumps worked and ILS initialized.

17. (SBU) Boeing 727-270 PAX configuration, YI AGQ, 2261-A3WE)700, Condition good, last recorded flight unknown, last known maintenance activity 1999. Engines 1, 2 & 3 no visible corrosion, no visible structural airframe corrosion, structural condition of upper tail assembly unknown, paint good, tires low and showing minor cracking, landing gear and hydraulic systems had no visible corrosion or damage, accumulators still holding pressure, interior very good, cockpit was serviceable, batteries on aircraft, but disconnected. Fuel was still present in tanks. External power was applied, and all systems powered up, fuel transfer pumps worked and ILS initialized.

18. (SBU) Boeing 727-270 PAX configuration, YI AGL, 21198-A3WE)700, Condition very good, last recorded flight unknown, last known maintenance activity 1999. Engines 1, 2 & 3 no visible corrosion, no visible structural airframe corrosion, structural condition of upper tail assembly unknown, paint good, tires low and showing minor cracking, landing gear and hydraulic systems had no visible corrosion or damage, accumulators still holding pressure, interior very good with large business class style seating in forward cabin, cockpit was in good condition, batteries on aircraft, but disconnected. Fuel was still present in tanks. External power was applied, and all systems powered up, fuel transfer pumps worked and ILS initialized.

19. (SBU) Boeing 727-270 PAX configuration, YI AG?, 2????-A3WE)700, Saddam's plane for use by senior officials with custom interior. Condition excellent, last recorded flight unknown, last known maintenance activity 1999. Plane was locked and until recently had an Iraqi security guard. Plane has very low hours and includes a complete set of spares and tools in hold. A number of weapons were found on the plane including AK-47s and pistols. Engines 1, 2 & 3 no visible corrosion, no visible structural airframe corrosion, structural condition of upper tail assembly unknown, paint very good, tires very good with no wear or cracking, landing gear and hydraulic systems had no visible corrosion or damage, accumulators still holding pressure, interior good, with custom layout. Large 1st class seats in forward cabin, VIP couches in center cabin with wooden coffee tables with gold ash trays and drink holders, picture of Saddam, business class seating in rear cabin. Cockpit was like new, batteries on aircraft OK, but disconnected. Fuel was still present in tanks. External power was applied, and all systems powered up, fuel transfer pumps worked and ILS initialized.

10. (SBU) After physical inspection of the aircraft we sat with and discussed their historical maintenance records with Mr. Bashir Abdel Hadi, the General Manager of Jordan Aircraft Maintenance Ltd (JorAMCo), and Mr. Imad Al Farahid, the Royal Jordanian (RJ) Director of line maintenance. They provided us with the following maintenance options available at Queen Alia:

11. (U) Service )  
A - Boeing-led complete physical assessment approx 2000 man-hours including records/NOTAMS review of mod history, bore-scope examination of engines, etc Cost \$120-150K;  
B - Check level \$40K (Includes change fluids and lubrication) plus parts;  
C - Check level \$300K plus parts;  
D - Check level \$1.5-2M plus parts (Will result in Airworthiness certification);  
Other - Customer specified service available on a per man-hour basis plus parts;

Parts )  
707 engines available for \$50K plus installation,  
All other Boeing parts available on order through JorAMCo parts service.

¶12. (SBU) We also discussed service measures required with a views towards both making the aircraft meet type FAA airworthiness certification for return to full operation, or to be serviceable for ferry status to return to BIAP only. The consensus of the maintenance staffs was that if return to service with Airworthiness certificates was the goal, that the assessment should be conducted of all aircraft first, except Saddam,s plane (all at meeting considered YIAG? to have such low hours and be in good condition that it could go straight into B-level maintenance and then fly to BIAP) and then order the appropriate service package as indicated by the assessment. Most likely this will involve D-Level service because of the length of time sitting, and the lack of knowledge about currency of updates and mods to the aircraft, with a cost of \$1.5-2M each. If a ferry status to BIAP only was all that was desired then:

A) 707 cargo YIAGE with a C-Level service could be made operational by replacement of 2 engines some tires and misc. parts taken from the other 707 airframe and signed off for ferry flight to BIAP for approx \$400K, barring some major unforeseen structural damage. Time required 4 weeks

B) The three 727-270,s could be given a B-level service for \$40K, plus cost of tires replaced, and misc. parts and signed off for a ferry flight for less than approx \$100K average each. Time required 2 weeks each

C) Saddam,s 727-270 could be given a B-level check and flown to BIAP for approx \$40K in less than a week.

¶13. Maintenance Slots at the service facility are limited as business is good. One slot exists for the 707 in Sept. No slots exist for the 727-270,s until May, except one in December, which could be booked soon. Another option was also briefly explored for making plane airworthy to ferry to BIAP. USAF has maintainers for both airframes. If USAF crews were available, could they use the ramp and limited facilities for USAF ground maintenance crews to inspect/service the aircraft to facilitate moving the aircraft back to Iraqi. Both companies had no problems with that if Gov,t of JO approved it.

¶14. In summary, the aircraft, with the exception of one 707, still have some value as commercial aircraft and could be returned to airworthiness with a committed expenditure, or made flyable and moved to BIAP for future determination of use or disposition with a modest expenditure. Either option can be done utilizing either local service or by bringing in USAF personnel to accomplish them.  
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